NATURAL NEWS

The Field Museum
Exploring
The Earth And Its
People

WEEKLY STAFF NEWSLETTER
May 30, 1997

MAIASAURUS WAS THE STAR
BUT FIELD MUSEUM HAD A
T. REX OF AN OPENING!

EDITORIAL

Did you ever think The Field Museum would beat out a U.S. President for an ABC World News headline? It happened on Memorial Day when ABC's lead story was the box office success of *Jurassic Park* and the surge of dino-mania sweeping the country. ABC interviewed Field Museum's **Pat Kremer** (Public Relations) on the topic of our Museum's *success* in attracting record numbers of visitors (around 10,000 on Sunday alone) on the Memorial Day weekend kick-off for summer programs. Bill Clinton had to make do with second billing for his European trip!

The overwhelming success of **Dinosaur Families** demonstrates the importance of the "changing marquee" provided by special traveling exhibits. We have a magnificent array of permanent exhibits, but we still face the challenge of stimulating the volume of repeat visits that define "blockbuster" success for museums as well as for movies.

In 1990, in the childhood of our public relations efforts, The Field Museum was the subject of a *New York Times Magazine* article, "Say Goodbye to the Stuffed Elephants," which described our internal debate on "showmanship versus scholarship." Thus it was particularly gratifying to see the wonderful marriage of the 1997 traveling exhibit of **Dinosaur Families** to the section on Field Museum work in Madagascar. (Does anyone in Chicago not recognize **Greg Buckley** after the past week's blizzard of publicity?) We have long struggled to find ways to bring the excitement of third floor science onto the public floors, and the Madagascar/Buckley segment seems like great progress toward that goal.

It took real strategic planning to enable virtually the entire Museum to pull together for this awesome weekend. The stores did a booming business; **Dino Dig** was highly popular. Educational programming enriched the experience of many. A new trolley service ferried visitors to the Museum. Public Services staff provided a high level of support to the record-high volume of visitors. Our unique, brand new special exhibit hall completely justified all the effort

it took to make it state-of-the-art.

A century ago amidst financially difficult times, Edward Ayer cajoled Marshall Field into financing the start-up of this Museum with the promise that Mr. Field would thereby play host to schoolchildren from all over the Midwest. Surely The Field Museum today is fulfilling that dream in a style that would have delighted Chicago's first citizen merchants -- and hopefully will stimulate many more to give and continue to give generously!

But most importantly, the Museum is educating the public in a manner that should engender greater support for both education and research. In *Cosmos,* the late Carl Sagan wrote of the destruction of the great library of ancient Alexandria by a people who had received no benefits from the knowledge accumulated within its walls. Sagan said:

> The permanence of the stars was questioned, the justice of slavery was not. Science and learning in general were the preserve of a privileged few. The vast population of the city had not the vaguest notion of the great discoveries taking place within the Library ... Science never captured the imagination of the multitude ... When, at long last, the mob came to burn the Library down, there was nobody to stop them. (P.335)

Will scientific knowledge remain the preserve of a privileged few? A public museum with a free-standing research facility at its core must grapple with this question deeply and often. A healthy discussion over the relationship between showmanship and scholarship will continue to inform our work. But on this Memorial Day weekend, at least, the Museum was enormously successful at capturing the imagination of the multitude and drawing them in to our "center for learning." ***Congratulations*** to all involved!

Written by **Carolyn Klyce**, Editor

GREAT JOB BY FINANCE

THE MUSEUM'S ANNUAL AUDIT HAS BEEN COMPLETED AND THE MUSEUM RECEIVED AN UNQUALIFIED OPINION WITH NO MANAGEMENT COMMENTS. IN LAY TERMS, THIS MEANS THAT WE PASSED WITH FLYING COLORS. FOR AN IMPORTANT, "BEHIND-THE-SCENES" JOB WELL DONE -- CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR FINANCE CREW!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR -- NEW SOLDIER FIELD EVENTS

July 7 -- International Soccer (was July 5)
July 18 -- Festival for 10,000 -- ***canceled***
August 24 -- International Soccer
September 23&24 -- Rolling Stones concert
September 27 -- Chicago Classic

Parking Pass Information

As everyone is aware, effective June 1, 1997 we will be shifting employee parking to the Soldier Field Lot located near the Gate 42 ramp.

Parking passes will be sold to staff for use of the lot. The cost is $40 per month. Passes will be available at the cashier window, which is open from Monday through Friday from 12:00 pm until 1:30 pm. The cashier window will be open extended hours on paydays, from 10 am to 2 pm. Parking passes can also be purchased through an automatic monthly draft from your salary.

Parking coupons will also be available at the cashier window. Each coupon costs $3 and is good for one day.

If you purchase a monthly pass or daily coupon and are working late, you can move your car to the West Lot after 4:30 pm

Questions? Please call Paula Brandabur, Public Services, ext. 564.

Welcome to
NEW DIRECTOR OF AUXILIARY SERVICES

Laura Sadler will join the Museum as Director, Auxiliary Services on June 2. Laura comes to the Museum from the Lincoln Park Zoo where she served as Director of Retail Operations. In that role, she directed a multi-store operation, oversaw guest services and non-food concessions, and managed the Zoo's parking contract. Prior to joining the Zoo staff in 1987, Laura held management positions with several large retailers. Laura brings to the Museum a wealth of experience, enthusiasm and energy.

Please join me in welcoming Laura to the Museum. -- **Laura D. Gates**, Vice President for Museum Affairs

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NOON BALLOON NEWS FLASH

CCUC and CEEB proudly present the second talk in the series "Genetic Structure in Humans," YANOMAMA POPULATION STRUCTURE by Professor Sloan Williams, Department of Anthropology, UIC-Chicago.

Drawing on her genetic Research of five Yanomama villages, Professor Williams will discuss the use of living populations in testing models of the relationship between social structures and genetic patterns. Professor Williams' talk will contribute richly to our on-going cross-disciplinary dialogue.

Noon
June 23, Tuesday
Zoology Classroom

MORE NOON BALLOON

The Noon Balloon presentation for Tuesday May 27, 1997 was delivered by **Kathleen Pryer,** Assistant Curator, Pteridophytes, Department of Botany, Field Museum. Kathleen discussed two aspects of her research on ferns. She described analyses of the phylogenetics of the higher categories of ferns based on molecular data from rbcL sequences as well as morphological data. Each data set by itself evidenced only partial support for portions of the respective phylogenetic hypotheses. When morphological and molecular data sets were combined, several major clades were strongly supported. A major finding was strong support for monophyly of heterosporous ferns, previously regarded as biphyletic. Additional work is needed to identify the sister group of heterosporous ferm ns. The second topic Kathleen discussed focused on members of the family Marsileaceae. She analyzed shape changes in leaf morphology during the development of representatives of each of the three genera. By treating these changes as ontogenetic trajectories in a phylogenetic framework, she provided one of the few botanical applications of the principles of heterochrony.

Editor's vacation:

No *Natural News* on June 20

You're on your own to put out a notice if you have a time-valued event. Publication will resume the following week.

Editor's note: Results from the questionaire, "To Improve the *Natural News*" will be summarized over the next few weeks in these pages. I appreciate the response and welcome further comments.

FIELD MUSEUM FAN MAIL

Before I go to heaven, of which I am certain, please accept my thanks for the Field Museum's splendid contributions to society.

Back in the early twenties my father provided service to the Museum through his Northwestern Electric Company in Chicago. Dad came to appreciate the depths and scope of the Museum's values and inspired his family to enjoy their offerings.

A good memory I have is of going with my family each Saturday morning by street car, 3¢ per child, 7¢ per adult, from Rogers Park to the Museum. We walked above/across railroad tracks, thrilled when running thru smoke emitted from engine stacks which of course "sooted" us (poor Mom) to reach the western door of the Museum in time to see movies of America's pioneering days. This was a special treat for little kids.

Over the years we became interested and educated with your many exhibits and functions of this great Field Museum. I have brought my 3 children and 17 grandkids to the Museum, knowing they will continue to use and love this Chicago treasure.

Your programs are wonderful, above all one can ask or think. Carry on and thank you.

An appreciative member 84 years young

TO IMPROVE THE *NATURAL NEWS*

Dear Readers:

My thanks to all who have responded to the questionaire, "To Improve the *Natural News*." The responses are still coming in, so I will wait until next week to summarize and print the results. I have been deeply impressed by the many thoughtful comments and suggestions for improvements. The questionaires are still available in the Mailroom for those of you who missed last week's issue. Please encourage your non-reader friends to fill one out, as I am very interested in hearing what would make the *Natural News* more attractive to them.

Why so much from Academic Affairs in this issue? The RAP programs are a significant initiative which will impact the Museum's work in many areas. The issue of *balance* in the *Natural News* coverage will be addressed when I summarize the results of the questionaire next week.

-- **Carolyn Klyce**, Editor

Deadline: Tuesday at noon, via E-mail (to klyce@fmppr.fmnh.org) or on disk.

Editor's note: IMPROVE THE *NATURAL NEWS*

My thanks to all who filled out the astro-brite pink questionnaire -- eighty-five as of May 27. Yes, the astro-brite was hard on the eyes -- as I discovered while tallying the responses -- but I just wanted to make sure that no one could say they didn't *see* it! In addition to publication in the *Natural News,* the questionnaire was also distributed to Departments through the mailroom so that non-readers would have a chance to voice their opinions.

The regular readership responded, with eighty-two saying that they read the *Natural News* every week, two saying once or twice a month, and one no response in this category. I was disappointed by the lack of response from non-readers, as I would truly like to know what would motivate non-readers to check it out. Dear Reader -- if you know anyone who claims not to read it, please ask them to fill out one of those very bright pink questionnaires still available in the Mailroom.

Not surprisingly, the regular readership found multiple categories of articles to be interesting. Below are some of the numerically-quantifiable responses:

When you read the *Natural News,* do you

62	read all or almost all the articles?
2	read only those articles that pertain to your job?
18	read whatever looks interesting from the headlines?
3	no response

What topics are *most* interesting to you? (Check all that apply.)

58	the scientists' work, comings and goings
73	exhibit news
50	personal items such as birth & death announcements, artist's gallery openings, etc.
43	awards to staff (such as Employee of the Month)
48	Field Museum fan mail
47	benefits (such as the Health Fair or news about insurance)
74	important notices of changes in the Museum, policies, current issues?

Accompanying the interest in exhibit news were occasional comments such as the following from an anonymous Exhibits staffer, "More on planned programs & exhibits -- pre-empt the rumor mill re: next summer, for instance ... Basically I like the balance as it is -- it's the only way I have to keep track of the complexities of this place ... Are the people who want to drop it administrators who already get the news first hand? If so, consider who the *Nat News* is really for ..."

Dear Reader -- please send more info! In order to publish more Museum Affairs, news, I need to hear about things *before* they happen. The scientific staff has been diligent in communicating -- please catch up! More summation to be published next week.

Deadline: Tuesday at noon, send to **Carolyn Klyce, Editor, *Natural News*.** Thanks!